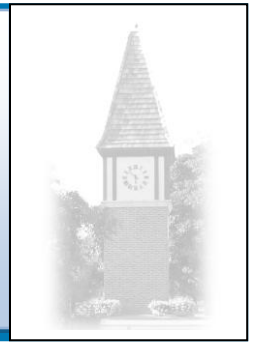


Neighborhood Watch Newsletter



Volume 16 Issue 1

January – February 2008

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Jury Duty Scam

This has been verified by the FBI

The scam works like this: The phone rings, you pick it up, and the caller identifies himself as an officer of the court. He says you failed to report for jury duty and that a warrant is out for your arrest. You say you never received a notice. To clear it up, the caller says he'll need some information for "verification purposes"-your birth date, social security number, maybe even a credit card number.

This is when you should hang up the phone. It's a scam. As a rule, court officers never ask for confidential information over the phone; they generally correspond with prospective jurors via mail. The scam's bold simplicity may be what makes it so effective. Facing the unexpected threat of arrest, victims are caught off guard and may be quick to part with some information to defuse the situation.

Please see *Jury Duty Scam* on page 2

Westminster Police Department

8200 Westminster Blvd.,
Westminster, CA 92683
Emergencies Call 911

Business Line: 714-898-3315
Dispatch Ext: 326
Traffic Division Ext. 339
Records Bureau Ext. 371
Business Hours:
Sunday- Saturday
7:00a.m. - 7:00p.m.

Website:

[www.westminster-
ca.gov/depts/police](http://www.westminster-ca.gov/depts/police)

Minimize Your Risk

One of the fastest growing types of fraud is identity theft. An identity thief takes some piece of your personal information and uses it without your knowledge. The thief may run up debts or even commit crimes in your name. It may not be possible to completely prevent identity theft, but you can lower your risk of becoming a victim.

Protect Yourself

Manage your personal information wisely. Protect your home address, home telephone number, Social Security number, bank and credit card account numbers and PIN numbers.

- ✓ Check your health plan and other cards. They may have your Social Security number on them.
- ✓ Don't give out your personal information on the phone – unless you made the call or know the callers.
- ✓ Tear up or shred papers with personal information, credit card offers and "convenience checks" that you don't use before you throw them away.
- ✓ Check your credit reports at least once a year. Check for changed addresses or fraudulent account information.

Please see *Minimize Your Risk* on page 3

Common Way ID Theft Happens:

Skilled identity thieves use a variety of methods to steal personal information, including:

1. Dumpster Diving. They rummage through trash looking for bills or other paper with your personal information on it.
2. Skimming. They steal credit/debit card numbers by using a special storage device when processing your card.
3. Phishing. They pretend to be financial institutions or companies and send spam or pop-up messages to get you to reveal your personal information.
4. Changing Your Address. They divert your billing statement to another location by completing a change of address form. 📧

Jury Duty Scam from page 1

"They get you scared first," says a special agent in the FBI Minneapolis field office who has heard the complaints. "They get people saying, 'Oh my gosh! I'm not a criminal. What's going on?'" That's when the scammer dangles a solution—a fine, payable by credit card, which will clear up the problem.

With enough information, scammers can assume your identity and empty your bank accounts.

"It seems like a very simple scam," the agent adds. The trick is putting people on the defensive, and then reeling them back in with the promise of a clean slate. "It's kind of ingenious. It's social engineering."

In recent months, communities in Florida, New York, Minnesota, Illinois, Colorado, Oregon, California, Virginia, Oklahoma, Arizona, and New Hampshire reported scams.

The jury scam is a simple variation of the identity-theft ploys that have flourished in recent years as personal information and good credit have become thieves' preferred prey, particularly on the Internet. Scammers might tap your information to make a purchase on your credit card, but could just as easily sell your information to the highest bidder on the Internet's black market.

Protecting yourself is the key: Never give out personal information when you receive an unsolicited phone call. 📞

Annual Credit Report

The **Fair Credit Reporting Act** (FCRA) requires each of the nationwide consumer reporting companies – Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion – to provide you with a free copy of your credit report, at your request, once every 12 months. The FCRA promotes the accuracy and privacy of information in the files of the nation's consumer reporting companies. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the nation's consumer protection agency, enforces the FCRA with respect to consumer reporting companies.

A credit report includes information on where you live, how you pay your bills, and whether you've been sued, arrested, or filed for bankruptcy. Nationwide consumer reporting companies sell the information in your report to creditors, insurers, employers, and other businesses that use it to evaluate your applications for credit, insurance, employment, or renting a home.

For more information regarding obtaining your credit report visit annualcreditreport.com, or call 1-877-322-8228. 📞

City of Westminster Department Directory

City Hall: 714-898-3311	Chamber of Commerce: 714-898-9648	West Justice Center: 714-896-7111
Family Resource Center: 714-903-1331	Consumer Affairs: 714-952-5210	Fair Housing Department: 714-569-0823
Code Enforcement: 714-893-3311	Health Department: 714-677-3600	Senior Center: 714-895-2878
Graffiti Hotline: 714-895-2876	Animal Control: 714-898-3315 Ext. 365	Vector Control: 714-971-2421

See Something Suspicious? **Report it!**

If there is an emergency, a person is in immediate danger or you observe suspicious activity alert local authorities **immediately** by dialing 911.

To provide the most useful information to law enforcement, record and report:

- Who did you observe?
- What did you see? Be specific.
- Where did you see it?
- When did you see it?
- Why is it suspicious?

Callers are encouraged to be accurate, fast and complete in their reports.

When describing a suspicious person try to use as many physical and behavioral descriptors as possible.

If the person is driving a vehicle, callers should try to provide the vehicle's license plate, year, make, model, size and color. 🚗

Minimize Your Risk from page 1

✓ **Treat your trash and mail carefully**
To stop an identity thief who may pick through your trash or recycling bins to

capture your personal information, always shred your charge receipts, copies of credit applications, insurance forms, physician statements, checks and bank statements, expired charge cards that you're discarding, and credit offers you get in the mail.

To opt out of receiving prescreened offers of credit in the mail, call: 1-888-5-OPT-OUT (1-888-567-8688). **Note:** You will be asked to provide your Social Security number which the consumer reporting companies need to match you with your file.

✓ **Verify a source before sharing information**

Don't give out personal information on the phone, through the mail, or on the Internet unless you've initiated the contact and are sure you know who you're dealing with. Identity thieves are clever, and may pose as representatives of banks, Internet service providers (ISPs), and even government agencies to get people to reveal their Social Security number, mother's maiden name, account numbers, and other identifying information.

Before you share any personal information, confirm that you are dealing with a legitimate organization. Check an organization's website by typing its URL in the address line, rather than cutting and pasting it. Many companies post scam alerts when their name is used improperly. Or call customer service using the number listed on your account statement or in the telephone book. 📞

CITIZEN ACADEMY

There is still space available in the current session of the Westminster Police Department's Citizen Academy. Participants have the opportunity to gain firsthand knowledge of the problems, policies and laws that officers deal with on a daily basis.

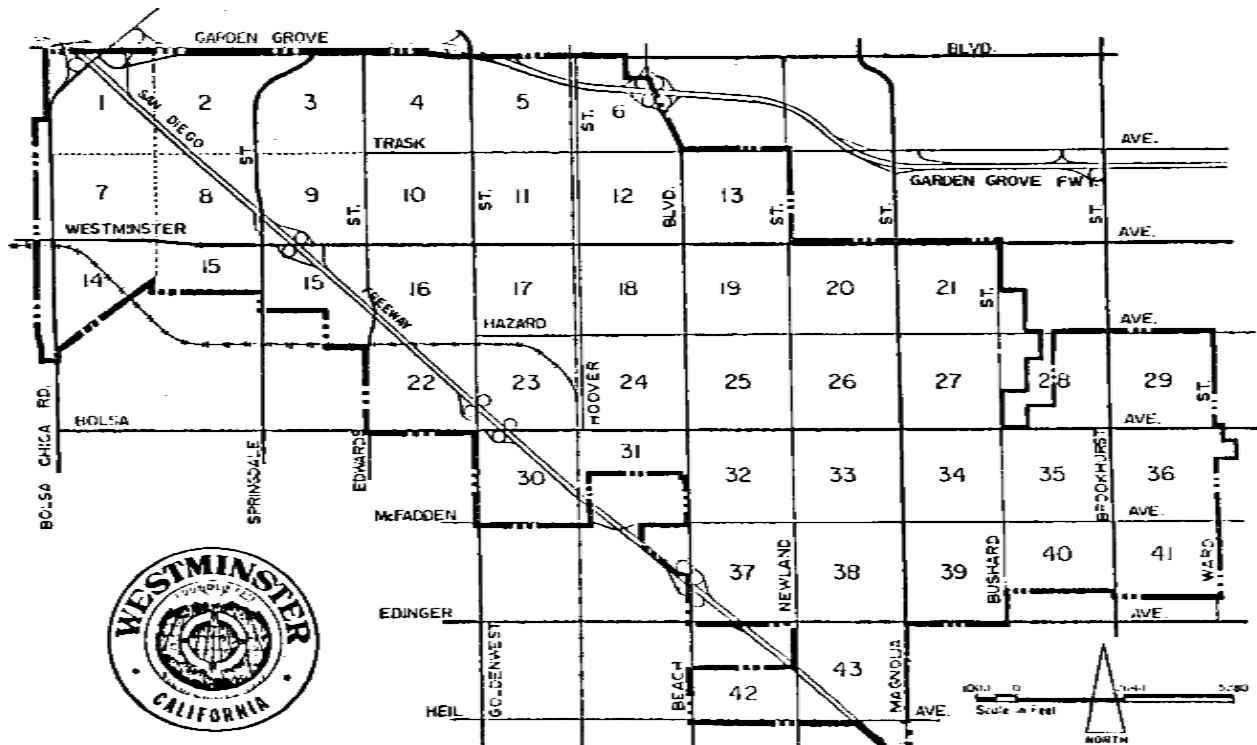
Weekly Topics Include:

Criminal Law
Domestic Violence
Gangs and Specialized Enforcement
Investigative Procedures
Laws of Arrest
Narcotics Enforcement
Officer Safety
Use of Force
SWAT
Driving Under the Influence (DUI)
Sex Crimes
Forensic Service
Animal Control

Participants will also have the opportunity to go on a ride along with an on duty officer. This allows participants to witness, directly, how things are really done on the streets.

The academy meets once weekly for ten weeks. Meetings include informational lectures, demonstrations, group discussions, and hands on activities from actual police training.

If you are interested in attending Citizen Academy please contact the Administrative Services Bureau at 714-898-3315 Ext 590. 📞



RESIDENTIAL BURGLARIES

A R E A	NOV	DEC	YTD	LAST YEAR	A R E A	NOV	DEC	YTD	LAST YEAR	A R E A	NOV	DEC	YTD	LAST YEAR
1	0	0	5	1	16	3	1	6	9	31	0	0	0	3
2	3	0	11	18	17	4	2	8	6	32	1	1	4	7
3	2	1	4	6	18	1	0	6	4	33	4	2	17	13
4	0	1	10	10	19	0	0	3	5	34	1	3	12	10
5	3	2	11	8	20	3	2	15	11	35	1	0	13	7
6	0	0	3	4	21	0	2	15	25	36	1	1	12	11
7	1	0	6	3	22	1	1	3	1	37	0	0	4	3
8	0	0	6	6	23	1	1	3	0	38	1	2	11	9
9	0	0	5	7	24	0	0	0	0	39	0	1	7	12
10	1	2	8	8	25	0	0	0	0	40	1	0	9	5
11	2	1	8	12	26	1	2	9	3	41	1	0	5	3
12	3	1	18	4	27	2	1	10	8	42	0	0	2	2
13	2	1	11	9	28	0	0	4	6	43	2	0	6	5
14	1	0	3	6	29	5	0	16	9					
15	3	3	10	7	30	1	0	5	5					

	NOV	DEC	YTD
TOTAL BURGLARIES	56	34	323

This newsletter is published bimonthly by the Administrative Services Bureau

